of such products at reasonable rates which alone would enable the poorer sections of the society to purchase and consume them. The said Report has been laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 28.10.1999.

(c) The Report has been forwarded to the Ministry of Commerce, being the administrative Ministry concerned, for consideration of the recommendations contained therein.

Law Commission's Suggestion for Five Year term for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies

176. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Law Commission, in its 170th report has suggested an amendment of the Constitution to provide for a fixed five year term for the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) by when necessary legislation is likely to be brought in Parliament; and

(d) whether the new points of the main political parties and the Election Commission in the matter would be ascertained in the first instance, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The issue being sensitive, will require deliberations/ consultations with political parties, Election Commission and other experts. No time-frame in this respect can be predicted.

Introduction of Competition Law

177. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to introduce a competition law to regulate mergers and acquisitions in the consumers' interest; and

(b) if not, what is the plan of Government to save the interest of the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has recently constituted a committee of experts with a view to examine the existing Monopolies an Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 and to shift the focus of the law from curbing monopolies to promoting competition and to suggest a modern competition law in line with international developments to suit Indian conditions. The Committee will also deal with consumer interests and acquisitions/mergers of companies.

The Committee has been asked to submit its report within a period of three months. The Committee has requested time upto 31st March, 2000 to submit its report.

Formulation of National Highway Development Programme

178. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has a National Highway Development Programme for the country;

(b) if so, whether a Golden Quadrilateral and East West corridor will be built on priority under this plan;

(c) when the work on the project will commence;

(d) what will be the year of the completion; and

(e) whether these roads will be freshly laid or will it be an expansion of the existing highways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The work on the project has already commenced.

(d) This project is scheduled for completion by the year 2010.

(e) The programme mainly involves expansion/upgradation of existing national highways.